

FROM THE SECRETARY

SECRETARY COLIN L. POWELL



We Have a Stake in Sustainable Development

Last month, at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, I reaffirmed President Bush's commitment to expanding the circle of freedom and opportunity.

Emphasizing that good governance, wise stewardship of the environment and freer trade are the only ways to achieve lasting economic progress, I pledged United States support to developing countries that adopt such farsighted policies. And I spoke of the critical role that public-private partnerships must play in helping them escape poverty and achieve prosperity.

Governments from developing countries and entrepreneurs from the private sector welcomed America's approach—and so, by the way, did most representatives from civil society and international organizations.

Johannesburg was only the latest—and not the last—stop on a long road toward creating a brighter future for the world's peoples. Last November, in Doha, Qatar, the United States successfully worked to put the needs of developing countries at the heart of global trade negotiations to ensure they will get the benefits of freer trade.

And last March, in Monterrey, Mexico, President Bush announced his Millennium Challenge Initiative to work with Congress to increase our development assistance by \$5 billion per year within three years. As an incentive and a reward, this aid will go only to those nations that are governed wisely and fairly, are investing in health and education and are following sound economic policies.

The poor of the world don't need more inflated rhetoric. They need a workable strategy to help them succeed. And that is what ultimately came out of the World Summit on Sustainable Development—in no small measure because of the dedication, skill and expertise of our American delegation and our diplomatic team in South Africa. The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation the conference adopted pulls together our ideas and those of others into one document that reflects the best thinking on sustainable development.

I look to the men and women of the State Department, here in Washington and especially those serving in our overseas posts, to take President Bush's commitment to development seriously and to do your utmost to put the Johannesburg Plan into practice.

Sustainable development isn't just a matter for our USAID or economics officers or our functional bureaus. Questions of development shape the overall quality of our bilateral relationships, and they hold far-reaching consequences for regional stability and security. All of us need to promote development as part and parcel of our larger mission of advancing core American values and interests worldwide.

Helping lift countless millions out of misery is an expression of our nation's deep humanitarian impulse. It also reflects the fact that our own well being depends on the well being of our fellow inhabitants of this planet.

An international consensus now exists on how best to move development forward. The men and women of the State Department can make important contributions to this worldwide effort.

I am counting on all of you to become familiar with the Johannesburg Plan. Let governments in developing countries know about the resources the United States is willing to commit if they undertake political and economic reforms. Encourage NGOs and businesses to form innovative partnerships.

One of the challenges that draws so many of you to a career in the State Department is the chance to make a difference in this world—in the lives of your fellow human beings. In the years ahead, we can help put clean water in the mouths of thirsty girls and boys, prevent the transmission of HIV/AIDS from mother to child, and preserve fragile ecosystems on which the futures of whole societies depend. In short, our work can bring new hope to men, women and children on every continent. ■